

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BERLIN 06454 121002Z

17
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 OES-06 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /030 W
----- 097363

R 120830Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3036
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
USIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BERLIN 6454

E O 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINS, PROP, GE
SUBJ: SUMMARY OF GDR COVERAGE OF 21ST OLYMPIC GAMES AT MONTREAL

REF: BERLIN 6318 (NOTAL)

1. THE GDR MEDIA PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS ON THEIR COVERAGE OF THE 21ST MONTREAL OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES BEGINNING SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THEY OPENED IN MID-JULY. THE EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF THE GDR TEAM, SECOND ONLY TO THE USSR, PROVIDED GRIST FOR THE GDR PROPAGANDA MILL, WHICH EMPHASIZED THE FOLLOWING THEMES IN ITS COVERAGE:

(A) SOCIALIST ATHLETES DID BETTER THAN CAPITALIST ONES. IN CITING THAT SOCIALIST ATHLETES OBTAINED 5.6.5 PERCENT OF THE MEDALS AWARDED, THE GDR COVERAGE IMPLIES THAT OLYMPIC COMPETITION PROVES IN YET ANOTHER WAY THAT THAT SOCIALIST SOCIETIES ARE SUPERIOR TO CAPITALIST ONES. IN REFLECTING ON GDR SUCCESSES DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY AT MONTREAL ON GDR TV COMMENTATOR COULD NOT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BERLIN 06454 121002Z

REFRAIN FROM CONCLUDING THAT THE GDR SECOND PLACE WAS

PROFF THAT THE GDR IS A "HEALTHY" SOCIETY AND ADDED THAT THE WORLD AND "NORTH AMERICA" WOULD NOW BE IMPELLED TO INVESTIGATE WHY THIS WAS SO AND THEIR OWN CITIZENS WERE "SO SICK."

(B) GDR VICTORIES ARE A CAUSE FOR EAST GERMAN PATRIOTISM. THE GDR MEDIA HERE AND THE ANNOUNCERS FROM MONTREAL COULD NOT CONCEAL THEIR ELATION AT GDR VICTORIES AND FOUND OCCASION TO PLAY DOWN WITH FAINT PRAISE AMERICAN AND OTHER WESTERN WINNERS. GDR TV COVERAGE INCIDENTALLY WAS QUITE FULL, PARTIALLY BECAUSE THE GDR BOUGHT EXTRA (AND EXPENSIVE) SATELLITE TRANSMISSION TIME. SUCH TIME WAS USED TO FULL ADVANTAGE IN PORTRAYING THE COMPETITIONS IN WHICH EAST GERMAN ATHLETES PARTICIPATED.

2. LITTLE APPEARED IN THE MEDIA HERE ABOUT THE TAIWAN IMBROGLIO OR THE AFRICAN BOYCOTT OF THE GAMES. IT COULD BE THAT EXCESSIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE LATTER DIFFICULTY MIGHT EMBARRASS THE GDR, WHICH CLEARLY HAD NO INTENTION OF QUITTING THE GAMES AND FOREGOING EXPECTED OLYMPIC VICTORIES.

3. IN THE AFTERMATH OF NEWS COVERAGE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES THE GDR PRESS HAD PUBLISHED IN FULL THE RESULTS OF THE GAMES AND HAD DEVOTED SEVERAL PAGES TO INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALL THE GDR MEDAL WINNERS (40 GOLD, 25 SILVER AND 25 BRONZE). THE WEEKEND EDITION OF "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND", AUGUST 7 AND 8, ALSO REPORTED A MEETING BETWEEN GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER AND THE GDR OLYMPIC TEAM DURING WHICH ONECKER HEAPED HIGH PRAISE UPON THE EAST GERMAN WINNERS.

4. COMMENT: THE GDR WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO MAKE MAXIMUM PROGAGANDA USE OF ITS SUCCESSES IN MONTREAL TO TRUMPET TO THE SPORTS-MINDED EAST GERMAN POPULATION THE VIRTUES OF SOCIALISM AND A HIGHLY ORGANIZED SPORTS ORGANIZATION. IT IS EVIDENT FROM RANDOM CONVERSATIONS WITH EAST GERMANS THAT THEY FELT AN IDENTITY WITH THE SUCCESSES OF GDR ATHLETES IN MONTREAL. SOME EAST BERLIN VIEWERS APPARENTLY STAYED UP UNTIL 2 AM TO WATCH A RECAPITULATION OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S EVENTS CARRIED X VIA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BERLIN 06454 121002Z

SATELLITE. STUDENTS AT HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY CARRIED SELF-WRITTEN CARDS WHICH COMPARED ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS THE TOAL NUMBER AND KIND OF MEDALS WON BY EAST AND WEST GERMAN COMPETITORS. IN ASKING ONE EAST GERMAN HOW SHE FELT WHEN SHE SAW AN OBVIOUS FOUL BY A RUSSIAN FOOTBALLER AGAINST AN EAST GERMAN, AND THE EAST GERMAN'S REFUSAL TO SHAKE HANDS AND MAKE UP IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENT, SHE SAID ONE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE COMPETING FOR A

GOLD MEDAL* THE GENERAL IMPRESSION GAINED FROM PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH EAST GERMANS THAT THEY BELIEVE SOVIET ATHLETES TO BE BAD LOSERS, WAS REINFORCED BY SPOT CONVERSATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE OLYMPICS. THE LOCAL STORY ALSO IS THAT IN REGULAR GDR/USSR SPORTS COMPETITIONS, EAST GERMANS ARE SOMETIMES TOLD NOT TO TRY TOO HARD. THIS IMPLIES OF COURSE THAT COMING SECOND TO THE USSR IN THE OLYMPICS WAS A POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE RESULT FOR THE GDR TEAM AS WELL AS A COMMENDABLE ACHIEVEMENT FOR A COUNTRY THIS SIZE.

5. TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE AVERAGE EAST GERMAN IDENTIFIES MORE CLOSELY WITH THE GDR REGIME AS A RESULT OF SPORTS VICTORIES, THERE IS NO READY ANSWER. SOME EAST GERMANS WE HAVE SPOKEN TO HAVE CRITICIZED THEIR GOVERNMENT'S NATIONALISTIC APPROACH TO OLYMPIC SPORTS, AND SEE GDR SUCCESSES AS INDICATIVE OF AN EXCESSIVE PRESSURE TO COMPETE AND PRODUCE WHICH IS A PERSISTENT FEATURE OF GDR SOCIETY. IN A SOCIETY WHICH REWARDS ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MANY KINDS WITH MATERIAL BENEFITS, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT INDIVIDUAL SPORTS COMPETITORS SEE SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITORS AS A MEANS TO PREFERENCE WITHIN SOCIETY AND TO SOME EXTENT TO A MORE SECURE FUTURE WITHIN THE SYSTEM WHICH HAS MADE THEIR COMPETITION POSSIBLE. COOPER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, OLYMPIC GAMES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BERLIN06454
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760310-0500
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760862/aaaacqbq.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BERLIN 6318
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 APR 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUMMARY OF GDR COVERAGE OF 21ST OLYMPIC GAMES AT MONTREAL
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINS, PROP, GC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006